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WOOL BATTS MADE NOW FOR WINTER BEDDING

After spring sheep shearing there may be raw wool on hand which cannot be sold to advantage. This wool is fine for light-weight comforters, baby quilts, foot warmers, and even pillows and mattresses. As this is the housewife's busy season and also additional bedding is seldom needed before fall, it is a good idea only to wash the wool and make it into batts now, finishing the bedding later on. If protected from moths over the summer, the batts will remain in good condition. It takes about 3 to 5 pounds of washed and carded wool for a medium-sized comforter and about twice that much raw wool before scouring and carding.

Large quantities of soft water are necessary for cleaning the wool. Equipment includes a broad wooden paddle with several holes in it to handle the wet wool and a drying rack of clean boards covered with clean sheets or other white cloth. Place the boards 2 or 3 inches apart on wooden horses so air can circulate through the wool.

Make a soap solution by heating slowly 1 pound of sal soda and 2 pounds of good neutral soap in 2 gallons of soft water. Fill up to 5 gallons. For the first suds dilute 1 to 2 quarts of the soap solution with 10 gallons of water at 120° F. The second and third suds should be a little cooler (110° to 120° F.) and contain less soap, depending on the condition of the wool. Use about 5 to 6 gallons of suds for each pound of raw wool. If the wool is in good condition to start with, use the soda and soap solution only in the first suds. The soda helps to cut grease but may make

the wool harsh if used after the protective greasy coating is removed.

Select only the cleanest of the fleece. Pick it apart, shaking out all the dirt possible. Remove all tags and dung locks. Wool that is stained will not scour white. Put only a small quantity of wool into the suds at a time. Always handle the wet wool with the paddle and avoid squeezing or stirring it while in the washing or rinsing solutions. Allowing the wool to stand 10 to 15 minutes in the suds removes much grease and dirt and reduces matting or felting the fibers. Do not use a washing machine or the wool will mat and felt together. Wrap it in a piece of cheesecloth so it will not tangle in the wringer. As many as four suds may be necessary, then rinse several times in clear water of the same temperature as the last suds. Spread thinly on the drying boards and dry thoroughly before using.

Wool cards may be bought to straighten out the washed wool and remove bits of chaff and foreign matter.

To make batts for comforters, put on the floor a paper 18 inches wide and as long as the desired comforter. Distribute the clean and carded wool on it in a layer 1 or 2 inches thick. Be sure the thickness of the layer is the same in all places. Cover with another paper and repeat until there are four layers. On top place a clean board 18 inches wide and the length of the layers. Weight down with 200 pounds or more and press 2 or 3 days. Remove the board and roll up each layer without removing the paper. Pack away with napthalene flakes or paradichlorobenzene crystals in a tightly wrapped package that moths cannot enter.